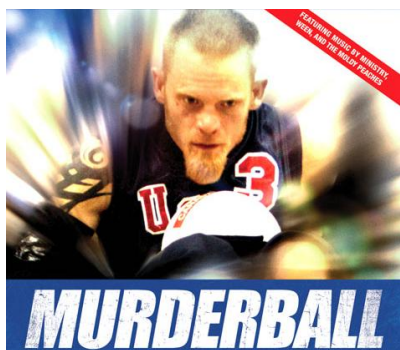


AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Murderball Takes a Whack at Stereotypes



On Saturday, May 1st, the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities sponsored a screening of the acclaimed documentary *Murderball* (2005),

as part of its ongoing *Disability Reframed* film series. For those of you who haven't seen the film yet, *Murderball* follows the 2004 U.S. and Canadian quad rugby teams as they fight their way to the Paralympic Games in Athens, Greece. It's a classic sports movie with a refreshing twist; for those who don't think that "disability" and "athlete" belong in the same sentence, *Murderball* offers irrefutable proof that athletes with disabilities are just as talented and dedicated as nondisabled athletes.

The film focuses on two main characters: Mark Zupan, the captain of the U.S. Paralympic rugby team, and Joe Soares, the "traitorous" ex-United States quad rugby champion who is coaching for Canada. Their story is about competition, but it's also about the day-to-day lives of these athletes, who are at once Paralympians and spokesmen for all individuals with disabilities. As Mark Zupan says, "Life is short, boys and girls. Enjoy it."

After the screening, CCPD's own Rachel Tanenhaus (Commission chair), with the help of Bet MacArthur, lead a discussion about the film that covered a wide range of topics.

(More on *Murderball*, page 2)

Mobility Innovations in the Third World

Tens of millions of people with disabilities in developing countries around the world do not have any access to the most basic of mobility devices, such as wheelchairs, that would allow them to leave their homes, move around in their communities, and live more productive lives.



Fatuma Acan at MIT's D-Lab
presentation.

This is just one of a wide range of thorny economic and social dilemmas recently addressed by an international panel of experts hosted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. On April 22, a panel of innovators, including two with disabilities, shared their ideas about sustainable development, global awareness, and direct action in an evening

Dubbed "Innovators Night," the presentation featured speakers from around the world, including two wheelchair users, Fatuma Acan and Ralf Hotchkiss. The panel was hosted by D-Lab, an ongoing project at MIT that is dedicated to innovation and social entrepreneurship and is headed up by inventor and lecturer Amy B. Smith. D-Lab, whose working slogan is "Development through Dialogue, Design and Dissemination" introduces students to social,

(More on Mobility Innovations, page 2)

Murderball (cont.)

Rachel began by sharing her initial skepticism about *Murderball*; around the time the movie was released, a friend invited her to watch the documentary for the first time. Of course, when you hear a word like “murderball,” certain associations invariably come to mind – many to do with death, destruction, and testosterone. Yet Rachel, like many first-time viewers, found that *Murderball* is much more than your average sports movie.

Murderball challenges the generic “overcoming adversity” theme, which is so common in many disability-related films. In such a film, a character must achieve his goal *in spite of* his disability: he is victorious if he somehow overcomes the disability that holds him back from living a “normal” life. Not surprisingly, this familiar trope is problematic for people with disabilities, and it is certainly problematic for the players on the U.S. Paralympic rugby team.

Like “overcomers,” the team rises in the face of adversity. Yet, in this case, the difficulty they are up against is not their disability, but the preconceived notions that nondisabled people have about individuals – especially athletes – with disabilities. Mark Zupan and his teammates seek to prove that, in many ways, their disabilities have helped to identify their greatest individual strengths.

Do you like the themes discussed in this article? Do you like the notion of challenging ourselves and each other about our preconceived attitudes about disability? *Disability Reframed: A Community Film Series* was created explicitly to explore these types of topics.

Join us at our next *Disability Reframed* event on Saturday, June 5 at 2 PM, at the Cambridge Citywide

Senior Center -- we will be screening the film *Luckey*, about a recently-disabled sculptor and his family adapting to new physical realities. *Luckey's* filmmaker, Laura Longworth, will be speaking after the screening to have a dialogue with the audience about the making of this award-winning documentary.

-- Opinion by Emily Kane

Mobility Innovations (cont.)

technological, and economic problems of developing nations around the world. “[We who live] ...with a disability in Africa, we lack a lot of things, the most basic things...somebody may spend their whole life without having one wheelchair,” said Ms. Acan, from Uganda. Ms. Acan is the director of Mobility Appliances by Disabled Women Entrepreneurs

(MADE), a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating low-cost durable wheelchairs and other mobility devices for people with disabilities.

She was the first woman to train as a wheelchair technologist in Africa, and also heads up the Pan-African Wheelchair Association, an international organization established with a mission to facilitate the provision of appropriate wheeled mobility aids for anyone in Africa with

a mobility disability.

In 1989, Ralf Hotchkiss was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship (nicknamed the Genius Award) for pioneering the concept of designing a wheelchair that uses the philosophy of “appropriate technology”, that is, technology which takes into account the economic, social, environmental, and other aspects of the community for which it is intended.

As the co-founder of Whirlwind Wheelchair International, Mr. Hotchkiss has now worked in 42 countries teaching people who need wheelchairs how to build and maintain them for themselves. Hotchkiss



Ralf Hotchkiss at MIT's D-Lab

and over 100 user experts designed the RoughRider wheelchair to be rugged for rough terrain, durable, functionally useful, locally repairable, and cost-effective.

Mr. Hotchkiss invited MIT students and others to work with his organization to help solve ongoing technical and financial obstacles, including developing "lighter weight frames that cost less to build" and "lower capital methods of manufacturing." "Working so hard on these problems" is important, Hotchkiss said, "I'm looking for a lot more inventors, because we've got a lot more problems to solve."

The entire D-Lab Innovators Night panel presentation can be viewed online at:

<http://techtv.mit.edu/collections/d-lab/videos/6464-d-lab-innovators-night-2010>

D-Lab:
<http://d-lab.mit.edu/>

Mobility Appliances by Disabled Women
Entrepreneurs
<http://madeuganda.wordpress.com>

Pan-African Wheelchair Association
<http://pawafrika.org/>

Whirlwind Wheelchair International
<http://www.whirlwindwheelchair.org>

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (See end of Calendar for all weekly/recurring events)

Now to July 1 **State House Holiday Card Contest for Artists with Disabilities** – The Secretary of the Commonwealth has added an Artists with Disabilities category to their 14th Annual Senior Citizens Artistic Interpretation of the State House Holiday Card Contest. To qualify, applicants must be 35 or older and use the State House as the main theme for their card. Entries will be displayed at the Commonwealth Museum, and two winning cards will be chosen to be printed and sold at the State House. Artwork MUST BE SUBMITTED BY JULY 1, 2010. For more information, including contest guidelines and instructions for submitting artwork, call 617-727-7030 (Voice) or 617-878-3889 (TTY) or go to <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/trs/trsgft/gftidx.htm>.

June 3 **Turning Three workshop in Woburn** – Sponsored by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, this free workshop provides information for parents about the process of transitioning a child from Early Intervention to publicly funded preschool. Discussion includes the required Early Intervention transition planning steps, eligibility for special education, the Team process and the parent's role in planning, making decisions and monitoring progress for their child. The workshop will be held at the Thom Mystic Valley E.I. Program, 10 J Gill Street, 6:30-8:30 pm. Pre-registration is required; call 617-236-7210 or register online at <http://fcsn.org/pti/workshops/home.php#schedule>.

June 5 **Accessible Recreation Fair in Brighton** – Hosted by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation's (MA DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP), this FREE rain-or-shine event will offer several adaptive recreational activities, including hiking, letterboxing, park quest, face painting, and interpretive programs. There will also be a cycling fair with an assortment of accessible cycles available for use. This is a great opportunity to learn about a multitude of accessible recreation programs offered by several organizations, both in the Greater Boston area and beyond. This event will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Artesani Park in Brighton and pre-registration is highly recommended. For more information or to register, call Gigi at 617-626-1294 or Marcy at 413-545-5758 or see http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access.

June 5 **Luckey, another FREE movie presented by Disability Reframed: a Community Film Series** – Escape the summer heat and come see this biographical film depicting Boston sculptor Tom Luckey's

adjustment to a new physical reality and, consequently, a new artistic expression. The screening, followed by comments and an open-forum discussion led by filmmaker LAURA LONGSWORTH, Director of *Luckey*, will be held from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. in Central Square, Cambridge. This is a free public event; bring your friends! The site is wheelchair accessible. No need to RSVP. For questions, contact the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities at 617-349-4692 (Voice), 617-492-0235 (TTY) or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov>.

- June 10 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting**—meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- June 12 **Beep Baseball, Accessible Baseball for Blind and Visually Impaired Youth** – Hosted by Our Space Our Place, Inc., families with visually impaired youth ages 6-18 are invited to come play beep baseball from 10:00 a.m. to noon at Chestnut Hill Park in Brookline. This form of baseball is played with standard softball bats, a ball that emits an audible beep tone, and two bases which emit an audible buzzing sound, and all players are blindfolded to equalize each player's degree of visual impairment. Call 617-459-4084 for more information or to register for the event or visit <www.ourplaceourspace.org>.
- June 12 **Visually Impaired and Blind User Group (VIBUG)** – Members of VIBUG, which is a group serving blind and visually impaired computer users, are meeting from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at MIT, 77 Mass Ave, Building 5, Room 134 in Cambridge. Annual membership dues are \$20. For more information, call 617-383-9560, email <president@vibug.org>, or see <www.vibug.org>.
- June 20 **Free Community Day at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA)** – Free admission to the MFA, located at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. The MFA is wheelchair accessible and additional accommodations are available by calling Hannah Goodwin at 617-369-3189 (voice) or Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 (voice) or 617-267-9703 (TTY), or by emailing <access@mfa.org>. For more information about accessibility at the MFA, see <www.mfa.org>.
- July 7 **Bike Riding 101 for Parents** – Offered by the Asperger's Association of New England (AANE), this workshop will help parents learn why bike riding is a complex skill and how to break the process of learning how to ride a bike into manageable steps for their children with Asperger Syndrome and related disabilities. This workshop will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. at the AANE office in Watertown, with a registration fee of \$40 for AANE members and \$50 for non-members. For more information, including possible partial scholarships, or to register, call 617-393-3824, email <info@aane.org>, or see <www.aane.org/upcoming_events>.
- July 20 **Power Chairs on Ice** – Offered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP) at the Cronin Rink in Revere from 1:30 – 3:20 p.m., this is an opportunity for power wheelchair users to spin, slide and play ball games on the ice! For more information or to register, contact the UAP at 617-626-1294 or 413-545-5353 (voice) or see <www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access>.
- July 26 **Public Celebration on the Boston Common of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act** – Come celebrate the 20th anniversary of the landmark passage in 1990 of one of our nation's premier civil rights laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)! This public celebration taking place on the Boston Common from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. will bring together great speakers and great performers in the heart of Boston. For more information, call the New England ADA Center at 1-800-949-4232 (voice/TTY) or email <oharrison@humancentereddesign.org>.
- July 30 **Free Community Day at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston** – see June 20 listing for details.
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July 31 **Annual Adult Conference “Know Yourself: The Key to a Better Life 2010 with Nick Dubin”** – with details, including times, still to be announced, this conference sponsored by the Asperger’s Association of New England (AANE) will be held at Northeastern University. Dr. Nick Dubin, who himself has Asperger Syndrome, has authored three books and produced three DVDs on issues related to Autism Spectrum Disorder. For information about conference details as they become available, see <www.aane.org/upcoming_events>, or contact AANE at 617-393-3824, or email <info@aane.org>. For more information about Dr. Dubin, see his website at <<http://www.aspergerwisdom.com>>.

Weekly & Recurring Events

Ongoing by Appointment

Injured Worker Support Meetings – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1st Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm. Meetings/appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4th Floor Conference Room. Volunteers provide resources and support. For more information or to set up a meeting, call 617-247-6827, or go to <www.rsiaction.org>.

Mondays

NAMI Connection – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, meets every Monday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Community, 153 South St, 2nd Floor in Somerville. The group is free and open to all who self-identify as having a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. For more information, contact Janel Tan at 617-863-5388 or <tanj@vinfen.org>.

Tuesdays

Boston Voice Users – this group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software meets from 7:30 – 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm.135. To find out more about meetings and discussions go to <www.bostonvoiceusers.org>.

Wednesdays

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA meets 1 – 3 p.m. at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY or email <aact@ctps.org> for more information or to request interpreters. Security measures require proper ID for access to meetings.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group meets every Wednesday evening, 7 - 9 p.m. at McLean Hospital in Belmont (de Marneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Call 617-855-2795 or see <www.dbsaboston.org> for more information.

Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors – The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of introductory one-on-one guided tours to the Museum and its collections for blind and low vision individuals who want to build a deeper relationship with the Museum. Each monthly

session focuses on a different collection and includes wayfinding and verbal description of spaces. These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am and the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Individuals can attend one or more sessions, whichever interests them. Guided tours can also be scheduled at other times. Pre-registration is not required unless a visitor needs a sighted guide or other access accommodation. Contact Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 or <vburrows@mfa.org> to register. Call 617-369-3189 or email <access@mfa.org> or go to <www.mfa.org> for more information. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston, 02115 and is accessible by the Green line “E” train to the “Museum of Fine Arts” stop, or the Orange line train to the “Ruggles” stop.

Free introductory tour of MFA in sign language & with assistive listening devices – A new monthly offering at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. These tours will be given at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. No pre-registration is required; meet at the Sharf Visitor Center in the MFA. For more information about accessible programs Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 voice, 617-267-9703 TTY or email <access@mfa.org>.

Open Support Group for Adults on the Autism Spectrum – Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 pm at the offices of the Autism Association of New England (AANE), 85 Main St., Suite 101, Watertown, MA. Hosted by Jamie Freed; a \$5 donation is suggested. RSVP to 617-393-3824, x310 or <Jamie.Freed@aane.org>.

Rainbow Support Group for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Funded by Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong and the Department of Developmental Services, and hosted by Cambridge Family & Children’s Service (CFCS), this group provides an opportunity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals with developmental challenges to find their voice, be heard and supported in a safe, friendly environment. Participants must be at least 22 years old. Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, 6:00-8:00 pm at CFCS, 60 Gore Street, Cambridge, which is accessible by taking the MBTA Green Line to the Lechmere station. For more information, contact Peter Montalto at <pmontalto@helpfamilies.org> or 617-876-4210, x122.

Senior Support Group for caregivers over 60 – meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Family Resource Center, 20 Gould Street in Reading. Share and learn with other seniors who have adult family members with developmental disabilities. For meeting times or more information, contact Judy SantaMaria at 781-942-4888, x4022 or <familysupport@theemarc.org>.

Thursdays

Autism Support Group – meets 3rd Thursday of each month, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Central Square Branch of Cambridge Public Library, 45 Pearl Street in Cambridge. For more information contact Lorraine Iacopucci at <liacopucci@nsarc.org> or 978-624-2304.

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting – meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations. **NOTE: CCPD will not be meeting in the month of July.**

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group – meets at Mass. General Hospital every Thursday, 7 - 9 p.m. in the Schiff Conference Center Room, Suite 4A on the 4th floor in the Yawkey Building. Follow the signs. Meetings are free and open to public. For more information call 617-855-2795 or email <mghgroup@dbsaboston.org>.

“Piecing the Puzzle,” a Parent to Parent Autism Support Group – meets in Jefferson Park Community

Room #1, at Jackson Place in Cambridge every Thursday from 10 am to 12 noon. The purpose of this group is to provide support and understanding to families with children on the autism spectrum and to increase autism awareness in the community. Sponsored by Cambridge Family & Children's Services in collaboration with the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS). For more information or to become a member, contact Yevett Fraticelli at <piecing_the_puzzle@yahoo.com> or 617-876-4210, x105.

Sundays

Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors –These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am. Pre-registration is not required for the Sunday tours unless a visitor needs a sighted guide or other access accommodation. See Wednesday listing for details.

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

The Commission was established in 1979 to act as a clearinghouse on disability and access issues throughout the City of Cambridge. We strive to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory. The Commission provides information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to individuals and their families, employers, public agencies, businesses and private non-profit organizations.

The goal of our 11-member citizen advisory board, comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities, is to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life. Our regularly scheduled Commission meetings, which always include an opportunity for public comment, are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

Access Notice: The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in e-mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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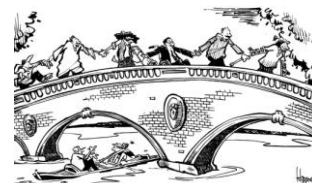
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We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm

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Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

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